

Message Text

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DOD/ISA - MR. QUANT (PHONE)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO IMMEDIATE

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 075132

EXDIS , USCINCSO FOR GENERAL ROSSON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, MILI

SUBJECT: VISIT OF USCINCSO

1. DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT THE CHILEAN MILITARY ARE PLANNING TO DECORATE GENERAL ROSSON DURING HIS FORTH-COMING VISIT. WE FURTHER UNDERSTAND THAT THE GENERAL WOULD PREFER NOT REPEAT NOT TO RECEIVE A CHILEAN DECORATION AT THIS TIME AND UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. HE HAS IN MIND, AS WE DO, THE RISK OF PUBLICITY WHICH COULD BE EXPLOITED BY THE JUNTA'S CRITICS HERE AND ELSEWHERE TO THE DETRIMENT OF OUR ABILITY TO COOPERATE WITH THE GOC IN THE FIELD OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

2. THE DEPARTMENT STRONGLY SUPPORTS GENERAL ROSSON'S POSITION. WE BELIEVE THE CINC'S VISIT TO CHILE AT THIS TIME IS JUSTIFIABLE AS PART OF HIS REGULAR TRAVELS AND WE ANTICIPATE BENEFITS IN TERMS OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE CHILEAN ARMED FORCES. HOWEVER, THE BESTOWAL OF A DECORATION MIGHT UNNECESSARILY FOCUS CRITICAL ATTENTION ON THE VISIT AND LEND ITSELF TO A DISTORTED INTERPRE-
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TATION OF OUR RELATIONS WITH THE CHILEAN MILITARY.

3. WE FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT THE JUNTA AND THE ARMED FORCES ARE LIKELY TO RESENT ANY SUGGESTION ON OUR PART THAT THE CUSTOMARY MEDAL WOULD NOT BE WELCOME AT THIS TIME. WE KNOW HOW SENSITIVE THEY ARE AND HOW IMPORTANT

IT IS THAT WE AVOID CONVEYING TO THEM AN IMPRESSION OF CONDEMNATION. NEVERTHELESS, THE RISKS INVOLVED IN A DECORATION APPEAR TO US UNACCEPTABLE.

4. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO CANCEL THIS ASPECT OF THE VISIT. YOU ARE IN THE BEST POSITION TO JUDGE HOW THAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT UNDUE DAMAGE TO OUR RELATIONS. IT WOULD, HOWEVER, APPEAR FROM HERE THAT A FRANK EXPLANATION OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROBLEM AT ISSUE WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE. YOU WILL, OF COURSE, WISH TO AVOID REVEALING GENERAL ROSSON'S OWN RESERVATIONS. YOU MAY REFER TO THE DEPARTMENT'S CONCERNS IF THAT WOULD BE USEFUL. KISSINGER

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